

Child Support Report

Vol. 37 No. 8 September 2015

COMMISSIONER'S VOICE - SPOTLIGHT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS


VOICE | BLOG

Domestic violence survivors in the case load

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We know that domestic violence is an **every** month concern for child support agencies, but October provides an extra reminder of the critical role safe access to child support services plays for survivors and their families. This issue of the *Child Support Report* features a number of articles addressing the need for domestic violence safeguards and resources for parents receiving child support services.

In talking with child support professionals over the past year about the connection between child support and domestic violence, I've consistently heard the following theme: "We know domestic violence is a huge issue for families in our caseload and we want to do more to enhance safe access to child support, but we're not really sure where to start." Just like one size *doesn't* fit all parents when it comes to delivering child support services, there's not one approach to developing a comprehensive response to domestic violence. With that in mind, OCSE has developed new resources for child support agencies to use as a roadmap for starting the process of enhancing safe access to child support. These resources draw on the experiences of your peers in other states and jurisdictions. See *Promising practices and new resources* on page 3.

Recent research data highlighted in OCSE's upcoming resource "Safe Access to Child Support Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence: Scope of the Issue" are sobering. The data should prompt all of us in the child support profession to renew our efforts to enhance our program's response to domestic violence:

- More than 4 out of 10 custodial mothers who don't have a formal child support order and aren't getting any informal support report domestic violence by the other parent,
- Underreporting of domestic violence by parents receiving child support services is substantial. Custodial parents surveyed by researchers at the University of Texas reported domestic violence at more than [4 times the rate disclosed to the child support program](#), and
- Nearly 1 in 10 unmarried mothers completing a voluntary paternity acknowledgment at the hospital report being injured by the father during pregnancy.

Behind those numbers are real people. The transcript that follows my blog of an interview with one domestic violence survivor, Michelle, offers a moving reminder of what is possible when child support agencies are domestic violence-smart and respond with skill and compassion to survivors in our system.

The good news from our [Parenting Time Opportunities for Children](#) (PTOC) pilot grants is that child support agencies can play a vital role in identifying and referring parents to services. A PTOC grantee in San Diego described one parent's experience this way, "The process was not intimidating and the positives that came from getting a safe visitation order really benefited her family."

Vicki Turetsky

Inside this issue

- 1 Domestic violence survivors in the case load
- 2 Michelle's Story
- 3 Domestic violence guidance, support, and training
- 3 Promising practices and new resources
- 4 Indiana domestic violence training
- 5 Social media's impact on domestic violence
- 6 Florida child support improvements
- 7 Electronic cash payment options remove roadblocks
- 8 Asian delegation visits Virginia child support
- 9 Parenting time advertisements 'on the go'
- 9 Office of Audit receives HHS recognition
- 10 Child Support Recognition Month Events

Strategic Plan Update

COMING IN THE
OCT CSR

Subscribe to the *Child Support Report*. Sign up on the newsletter homepage



Michelle's Story (Transcript)

Editor's note: The text below was adapted from a transcript of a video interview provided by the Texas Attorney General's Office. The author's name was changed to maintain her confidentiality. We removed some content for space.

My name is Michelle. I was married to a man who, when I look back now at the signs, he was abusive from the beginning. It started off slow and subtle, but got worse - it wasn't just physical, it was mental. I felt very lost, very scared with nobody really to turn to. For a long time I didn't even think about leaving, I didn't realize I had other options.

It was a bad situation, when the last assault happened. I called 911, but he had thrown the phone down and I thought it had broken, but the 911 operator heard it all. He was screaming at me and saying nobody is going to believe you ... you're going to be on the streets, you're going to be on food stamps, all you are is white trash.

Child support was such a huge aspect of helping us get through this. I couldn't have done it, couldn't have done it.

I was holding the baby who also got hurt when he knocked me down. And he said, "Throw him in the trash can; he's white trash just like you." I remember thinking, even if I did not have faith in myself... I couldn't let my children know that this was okay. Even if I was going to be on the streets, even if I was going to be on food stamps, they had to know that this is not acceptable.

So I went to the shelter with my boys. They went from a nice school and being involved in all kinds of activities to being thrown into a chaotic and uncertain environment. I lost my vehicle. I had no money, no education, nothing really.

I didn't have a choice about child support. I was put into the system because I was getting benefits and it was very scary. This is where the child support office is extremely important. I was very nervous and scared. It's hard to explain to somebody who hasn't been in that situation, but you can walk into a courtroom with nothing. I would see him and things would come flooding back — my knees went to rubber and I couldn't speak. All the time, he was calm, and charming, and collected, and would laugh and joke with the other people in the courtroom. And I would have to just know that I had to be strong because things had to change.

The judge ordered supervised visits and both regular and back child support. My ex fought it, he didn't want to deal with the security at the visitation center and didn't want to lose access to me, but the judge wasn't fooled by his charm. I was so grateful — the supervised visits take away the control

and anger and he has no access to me and I know the kids will be safe.

The financial aspect of it is very important. You need diapers, you need milk, you need food, you need Band-Aids. And the child support office stepped in and enforced for me. I didn't have to. [That] was a huge blessing in my case. It took the spotlight off of me. I was no longer the bad guy; the child support office was the bad guy. I don't want anyone to be in that place, but I figured they have a little more power than I do. Even if it was only \$286 a month, it made a big difference for us. I finally was able to get a used car, it didn't have air conditioning or anything like that, but I was able to get some of the necessities for my kids.

I went to counseling. My friend said, "Michelle, why don't you just go to school?" I remember saying, "I'm not smart enough. I can't do that," but I took his advice and passed the tests.

So, now I'm a registered nurse at a children's hospital. I love my job. I'm able to give back now and that's what's amazing. The help child support gave me is now indirectly affecting all of the children I get to help at the hospital, so the system works. It's important. Because of the help, generosity, and perseverance of the child support staff, I'm able to give back now.

Child support was such a huge aspect of helping us get through this. I couldn't have done it, couldn't have done it.

Domestic violence resources

OCSE and the Administration for Children and Families have many online resources available. The information below was published October 3, 2014, in Information Memo 14-03, [Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Focus on Resources, Collaboration and Confidentiality](#).

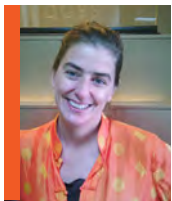
"State and local domestic violence organizations and coalitions are an invaluable source of resources for child support programs, including educational and training materials. In addition, OCSE maintains several [domestic violence resources on our website](#) geared to the child support community.

"OCSE also has a [collection of training tools](#) developed in collaboration with the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. These materials can help child support offices identify and address domestic violence issues faced by their customers and help them safely pursue child support. The training toolkit includes a training presentation, trainer notes, and a training guide to help child support managers conduct this no-cost training with their staff.

"Other OCSE resources include a ["bench card"](#) for use by the judiciary and a caseworker ["desk card"](#). There is a [fillable brochure](#) so child support agencies can provide local child support and domestic violence services contact information to domestic violence victims. This brochure is also [available in Spanish](#)."

For more resources, read [IM-14-03](#) and visit the [child support Family Violence website](#).

Domestic violence guidance, support, and training



Sarah Smith, Senior Program Attorney, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) understands the evolution the child support system and its mission are going through in response to the changing demographics of the families it serves. In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, here is a wealth of resources to help child support agencies and courts respond in ways that protect both children and parents who have suffered the effects of violence in their families.

Developing judicial skills

NCJFCJ works with the nation's leading judges and experts on family violence to provide training and technical assistance to the judiciary and court systems personnel. In partnership with Futures Without Violence and the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, the NCJFCJ operates the [National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence](#). The institute provides intensive workshops to help judges and judicial officers develop and enhance their judicial skills in domestic violence cases, especially child support cases.

Preserving family safety and wellbeing

Along with our national partners — the Battered Women's Justice Project and the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence — we offer training and technical

assistance for administrative and court personnel involved in child support work and tailor it to the particular needs of your agency or region.

Safe and meaningful parental access

The council also hosts a website that contains valuable resources on visitation and exchange programs. NCJFCJ developed the site through the Safe Havens and Supervised Visitation Program of the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice.

For more information on available resources and training on domestic violence for child support or parenting time decision-making, visit the following links:

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

<http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/domestic-violence>
Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange
<https://safehavensonline.org>

National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence

<https://www.njidv.org/>

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

<http://www.nrcdv.org/ta-training/>

Battered Women's Justice Project

Resource Center

<http://www.bwjp.org/resource-center.html>

Practice Guide for Custody Decision-Making in Domestic Abuse Cases

<http://www.bwjp.org/resource-center/resource-results/practice-guides-for-family-court-decision-making-in-domestic-abuse-related-child-custody-matters.html>

Promising practices and new resources

OCSE is highlighting promising domestic violence safeguards and practices for the child support program through the following activities and new resources:

TWO HOUR-LONG WEBINARS: co-hosted with the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), discuss promising practices and collaboration opportunities for safe access to child support services. The first webinar, designed for state child support programs and state domestic violence coalitions, happens on October 15 at 2 p.m. EDT. [Register here](#). The second webinar, designed for Tribal child support programs and Tribal domestic violence service providers, runs on October 29 at 2 p.m. EDT. [Register here](#). Both webinars will be recorded and content will be available after the sessions.

NEW RESOURCES: "Safe Access to Child Support Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence: Scope of the Issue" and "Enhancing Safe Access to Child Support Services: IV-D Program

Inventory and Planning Resource." These will document new research on domestic violence in the child support program and provide practical steps to develop a comprehensive response to domestic violence. We designed them specifically so child support agencies can use them as roadmaps for enhancing safe access to child support. OCSE will post them on the website in November. Staff will be available to provide technical assistance to child support agencies using the new resources.

NEW, NATIONWIDE NETWORK: The Domestic Violence and Child Support Liaisons Network will support child support and domestic violence coalition collaborations, create peer learning opportunities, share best and promising practices for safe access to child support, and facilitate communication and problem solving across state and jurisdictional lines. OCSE and FYSB will launch the new network in early November.

Contact [Michael Hayes](#), OCSE Division of Program Innovation, for more information about domestic violence resources and collaboration support.

Indiana domestic violence training

**Linda Nearing, Assistant Deputy Director,
Indiana Child Support Bureau**

Indiana's Department of Child Services, Child Support Bureau is putting its Access and Visitation funding to new uses! This fall, the bureau is offering training on the interplay between domestic violence, child support, and parenting time to all county and state child support workers. (See map.)

The bureau and the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence — the state's federally designated domestic violence coalition — co-developed the three-hour training. We specifically designed the curriculum to be relevant to child support personnel in the prosecutors' and clerks' offices who work most closely with child support participants.

Coalition trainers have both child support and domestic violence training experience. This enables them to understand the kinds of situations that child support workers may encounter while working with parents. Like many states, Indiana's child support guidelines include a parenting time calculation. This training provides tailored content to help staff members understand and respond to the impact domestic violence can have when discussing the parenting time credit calculations.

The training covers:

- Domestic Violence 101,
- Verbal cues and actions that may indicate domestic violence,
- Ways perpetrators talk,
- Ways perpetrators may use children in domestic violence situations to manipulate the other parent or the court system,
- How domestic violence relates to child support,
- Safety planning for child support workers and participants,
- Parenting time when domestic violence is a concern, and
- Making healthy co-parenting choices.

Domestic violence is a community concern. The training we provide can help Indiana's child support workers better understand this complex issue. We hope that by increasing the child support community's awareness, more parents will find the information they need to secure financial support, make safe parenting time choices, and engage in positive co-parenting.

For information, contact Devi Davis, Federal Initiatives Liaison, devi.davis@dcs.in.gov.

Domestic Violence Awareness Training for Child Support Staff

* Please note: All times reflect local time

Monday, Nov 9th
• 9:00am to 12:00pm CST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm CST
LaPorte Co. DCS Office
1621 S. Woodland Ave.
Michigan City, IN 46360

Thursday, Sept 17th
• 9:00am to 12:00pm EST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm EST
Tippecanoe County DCS Office
250 Main St., Suite 301
Lafayette, IN 47901

Wednesday, Sept 30th
• 9:00am to 12:00pm EST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm EST
Brown Co. Gov't Center
201 Locust Lane
Nashville, IN 47448

Tuesday, Nov 10th
• 9:00am to 12:00pm EST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm EST
Allen County DCS Office
201 E. Rudisill Blvd., Suite 200
Fort Wayne, IN 46806

Monday, Sept 28th
• 9:00am to 12:00pm CST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm CST
Vanderburgh County DCS Office
100 E. Sycamore St.
Evansville, IN 47713

Tuesday, Sept 22nd
• 9:00am to 12:00pm EST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm EST

Wednesday, Sept 23rd
• 9:00am to 12:00pm EST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm EST

Thursday, Sept 24th
• 9:00am to 12:00pm EST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm EST

Child Support Bureau
500 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Monday, Oct 5th
• 9:00am to 12:00pm EST
• 1:00pm to 4:00pm EST
Ripley County DCS Office
531 W. US 50
Versailles, IN 47042
Please note your GPS won't find us.
Call 812-689-6295
If you need directions.

To reserve your seat, please RSVP to ISETS_CTU@dcs.in.gov and include all of the following:

- Date, Time and Location
- Number of people attending
- Names of people attending
- Your County Office

A confirmation will be sent once your request is received. If you do not receive a confirmation within 48 hours, we may not have received your request, and we ask that you resubmit the reservation.

* Please note: All times reflect local time

The other side of the desk

October is Customer Service Month. In recognition of that, here's a poem that gives a different perspective for our work.

Have you ever thought just a wee little bit
of how it would seem to be a misfit,
And how you would feel if you had to sit
on the other side of the desk?
Have you ever looked at the man who seemed a bum,
as he sat before you, nervous -- numb --
And thought of the courage it took him to come
to the other side of the desk?
Have you thought of his dreams that went astray,
of the hard, real facts of his every day,
Of the things in his life that make him stay
on the other side of the desk?
Did you make him feel that he was full of greed,
make him ashamed of his race or his creed,
Or did you reach out to him in his need
to the other side of the desk?
May we have the wisdom and lots of it,
and much compassion and plenty of grit,
So that we may be kinder to those who sit
on the other side of the desk.

Unknown

Social media's impact on domestic violence

**Michelle Toledo-Cainas, Program Director,
Georgia Latin@s Against Domestic Violence,
a program of Ser Familia Inc.**

Social media has become one of the fastest ways for individuals to get and share information, ideas, and stories. Georgia Latin@s Against Domestic Violence (GLADV), a program of [Ser Familia Inc.](#), sponsored a roundtable discussion in July on the impact social media has on domestic violence.

Without a doubt, social media can be an essential tool to educate people on the facets of domestic violence; yet it also allows for myths to continue and victims to be blamed. We held the meeting to unite our voices so we could collectively fight back against the negative beliefs society still has about domestic and family violence issues.

#whyispeakup

A 2013 article in the journal *Violence Against Women* reported that traditional media paid little attention to domestic abuse cases until the late 1970s. When the media did pick up the stories, public opinion could not be heard across the country let alone around the world as it is now. When the media does report on high profile cases of domestic abuse, negative public opinion can create barriers for survivors trying to find a way out. The stigma of them being at fault and being shamed for staying in the relationship can cause survivors to keep living in silence rather than seeking help.

Various agencies went to the July social media roundtable. Demetricus Johnson and Cheryl Reid-Drayton represented the Administration of Children and Families. Members from Georgia's [Criminal Justice Coordinating Council](#), with representatives from various state legal agencies, also attended. There were also staffs from local safe house programs and others who were there to discuss ways to use social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram to educate people and promote awareness. For example, we want people to recognize that an abusive relationship is not just about being physically hurt, but about one partner having power and control over the other. We also examined ways to ensure material was relevant to target audiences such as Latinos, African-Americans, and young adults.

Social media campaigns can be powerful and make an impact. They can start a conversation, bring knowledge about the cause, and — within the topic of domestic violence — bring hope to people in those situations.

Earlier this year, we saw survivors fight back with the hashtag #WhyIStay to share the barriers they faced and the reasons why leaving is not as easy as it often sounds.

GLADV has a social media campaign running now using the hashtag #WhyISpeakUp. Our concept is to support survivors in their fights. It is important to show survivors that others can be empathetic even though they, themselves, have never been in an unhealthy or abusive relationship. Studies from the Centers for Disease Control show that 1 in 4 women will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime so there is a chance we all know someone who has been in an abusive situation.

#WhyISpeakUp gives individuals the opportunity to share why they take a stand against violence and why they speak for those whose voice may still tremble or even have been taken away.

For more information, visit the [Serfamilia.org](#) website.



Members of GLADV and its partners
at the July roundtable discussion

Florida child support improvements

Chris Faupel, Program Communications Manager, Florida Child Support Program

Think of the many lives you come in contact with and have an impact on each day in your child support programs. We ourselves know how we prefer customer service — 24/7; online; fast and accurate. Florida provides child support services to over 1.5 million parents. Officials have challenged us to improve customer service avenues to meet the annual customer demand of over 900,000 walk-in visits and 1.6 million phone calls and web chats.

Web enhancements

Today, customers want access to information 24/7 and the internet is the common answer to many customer service needs. Two of our most widely used web-based options are Child Support eServices and our online web chat.

Child Support eServices: We currently have over 164,000 registered, active eServices users. Parents like the round-the-clock access to their child support case and the ability to manage some of their personal information. We are now developing an online application for services as well and integrating it with the eServices application.

Online web chat: Through our website, customers can web chat in writing with live agents eight hours a day. Our agents are trained to handle multiple chats simultaneously, lowering wait times even more.

Additionally, we have been working to redesign our public website and other online applications to provide both easier access and navigation to child support information and mobile-friendly web options.

Brick-and-mortar improvements

We have also been working to provide better non-web-based customer service delivery options. One of our major efforts is revitalizing our walk-in centers. We currently have 13 locations around the state offering our new walk-in service model that provides fast and accurate, in-person customer service. We have an open floor plan with a walk-up counter similar to a bank lobby. The new model has reduced wait times by up to 64 percent, helping us meet our goal of serving customers more quickly. It has also helped us reduce office space by about 4 percent.

With the new walk-in model, we also needed a better way to manage the intake and processing of clients in our lobbies. We implemented a statewide customer service queuing system that uses skills-based routing in both our call and web chat center and all of our walk-in centers. Skills-based routing assigns the service agents to customers based on the agents' in-depth knowledge of a particular

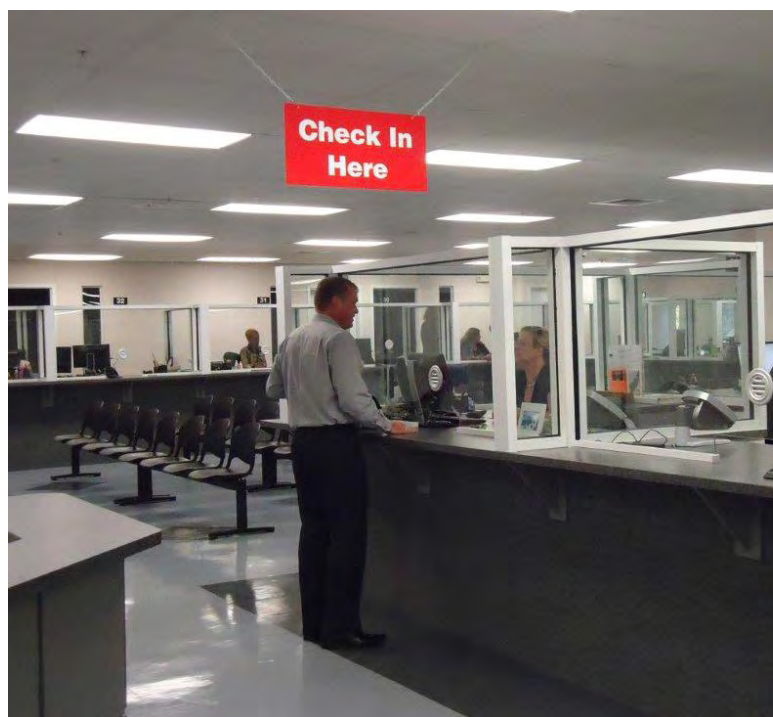
topic area. This helps us give customers the best information on the topic at hand.

After evaluating call center performance, we changed our telephone automation system to offer self-service options when call volume is high. Now, instead of receiving a busy signal when the queue is full, callers hear a message that offers a menu of self-service options. Customers who choose to access their case information online hear instructions for using our eServices portal. This effort has reduced average wait times from over 20 minutes to less than 10. It also saved us over \$800,000 annually for the toll-free telephone number. We continue to provide immediate assistance to employers and other state workers by offering dedicated employer and interstate telephone lines.

Developing employee knowledge & expertise

The heart of customer service starts with each of us. While it is great to have an eServices portal, self-help stations, and other neat tools for our customers, our workforce is the true key to delivering excellent customer service. To continue to improve, we have developed more strategies to help team members build and apply broader knowledge of child support processes and procedures. We are developing discussion points for our customer service staff to help guide them on what valuable information they should communicate to the customer to ensure understanding. We have also created five statewide customer service training modules that we rotate throughout the year to always keep customer service in the forefront of our minds.

For more information about our customer service improvements, contact Amy Franklin at franklam@dor.state.fl.us.



Electronic cash payment options remove roadblocks

Ike Anyanike, OCSE



No bank account? No checks? No money order? No problem! States are beginning to offer noncustodial parents opportunities to pay child support in cash at their neighborhood convenience store.

Nebraska first to go electronic

Some companies are now offering national electronic cash transaction networks that allow noncustodial parents to pay their child support at convenience stores, drug stores, and other private retail locations as an alternative to coming into the child support office to make a cash payment. Some locations also have kiosks available.

In 2014, the [Nebraska Child Support Payment Center](#), the state's disbursement unit, began partnering with an electronic cash transaction network to give noncustodial parents an easy way to make payments in cash at hundreds of convenient locations. It also offers a wider range of operating hours.

Electronic payment programs allow noncustodial parents without stable employment to make child support payments without worrying about paperwork or bank accounts.

State child support program administrator Byron Van Patten says that he favors anything that makes child support payments easier for our parents, and that this option catches a segment of our population that is unbanked and may not easily pay through the traditional methods.

Troy Reiners, the assistant state treasurer who oversees the payment center, said they were optimistic based on immediate responses of users. "It is a positive move when we can provide noncustodial parents the ability to get cash payments to us quickly and efficiently. It reduces the likelihood of enforcement action taken against them, and children receive the money they need and deserve without interruptions or delays."

The state also benefits. Cash payments are processed at the payment center and other county offices because noncustodial parents do not wish to mail large sums of cash through the post office. Reiners said the use of cash payments at state and county offices is declining for a number of reasons, including noncustodial parents' use of the alternative retail payment locations.

California gets on board

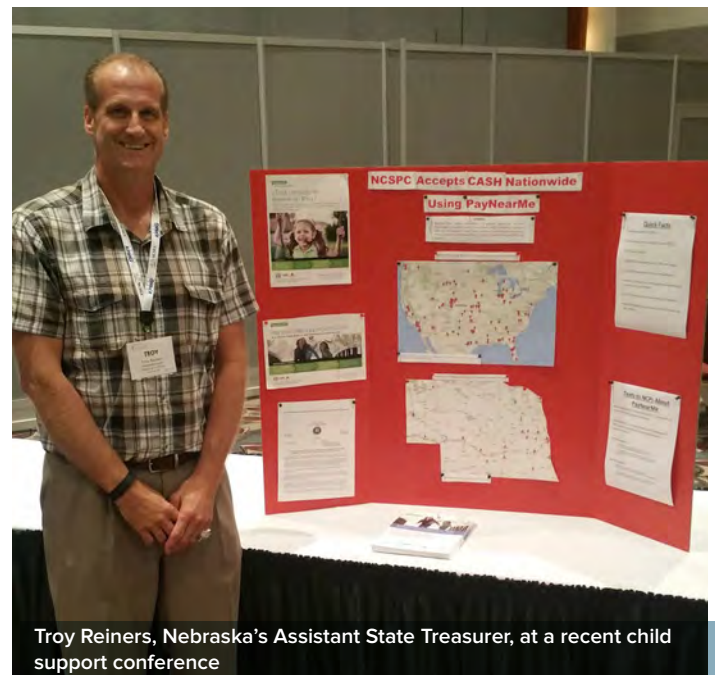
In early 2015, the California Department of Child Support Services also began accepting electronic cash child support payments. The company California used provided approximately 6,200 payment service sites in popular convenience, discount, and drug store chains throughout the state.

Officials believed three specific types of parents would benefit most by paying by cash electronically: seasonal workers, the self-employed, and those who did not engage in traditional banking. In a statement at the rollout, Director Alisha Griffin said electronic payments would "not only benefit the parents who owe child support, but it will also translate into more payments for their children."

In June, California followed Nebraska's lead and began accepting payments from a second vendor in Fresno County on a trial basis. During the two-month pilot, the county received 164 cash payments — nearly \$39,000 — from parents in 11 California cities and four other states. The initial pilot was so successful that officials rolled it out statewide in August. In the first month of statewide availability, customers have used it to make almost 230 payments that total \$51,000.

Provides convenience for parents who need it most

Electronic payment programs allow noncustodial parents without stable employment to make child support payments without worrying about paperwork or bank accounts. By using more than one processing company, customers have an expanded range of options and it often decreases their travel distance to payment locations. The convenience fee some companies charge, usually under \$2, is often cheaper than the cost of purchasing and mailing a money order or paying bus fare to get to a county child support office or payment center.



Troy Reiners, Nebraska's Assistant State Treasurer, at a recent child support conference

Each program sets up the parameters for their customers' use of alternate payment options. For example, Ohio limits alternate payment locations to parents who cannot have their income withheld through their employer.

Successes

In the last 14 months, Reiners said Nebraska received payments from parents in 31 states. The Cornhusker state also recorded the following statistics:

- 856 unique parents used the alternate payment option
- 420 used the option multiple times
- 5 made more than 20 payments
- 37 submitted more than 10 payments
- 18 made five or more payments of less than \$100

Reiners said one noncustodial parent made 28 payments of \$25 to \$30 over a 30-day period. Apparently, the noncustodial parent realized if he held onto the money until the due date, he might have spent it on something else.

In the first eight months, customers in California's child support program have made almost 11,000 cash payments totaling nearly \$3 million.

Enhancements

As states are lining up to identify alternate payment options to boost collections, more financial transaction vendors are devising electronic applications to make the job easier. States using electronic payment methods like their results as vendors continue to make improvements. Some vendors have systems that allow child support staff to check payments in real time. This could be useful in emergency situations such as verifying a noncustodial parent's payment in order to get a passport released. Designated staff can also push out a barcode remotely via email or text to a payer if necessary.

Moving forward

The problem of unbanked and underbanked households is a feature of economic life. A 2013 national survey of unbanked and underbanked households conducted by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation found that 7.7 percent of households in the United States were unbanked. This proportion represented nearly 9.6 million households.

As states continue implementing electronic cash payment options, offices are devising ways to increase or tweak their communications to noncustodial parents who do not have bank accounts. States such as Nebraska and California that have had success with electronic payment programs are searching for more options to make payments easier.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Asian delegation visits Virginia child support

The Virginia Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) was pleased and honored to host a delegation from the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and Child Support Agency in July.

The delegation observed a child support docket at the Henrico Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and met with judges and other court personnel. They also visited DCSE's Henrico District Office to observe operations. The group met with the division's executive team to discuss how the Commonwealth's program operates and toured the office's payment processing unit.

Korea's child support program began in March, so it is just getting off the ground. "They are where we were 35 years ago," noted Craig Burschem, Virginia's deputy commissioner for child support. Virginia staff was honored to have been a small part of the Republic's program implementation and hopes to work with them again in the future.



Henrico Presiding Judge Rondelle Herman meets with members of the Korean delegation



Members of the Virginia child support executive team and the Korean delegation at the Henrico Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court



IN FOCUS

Parenting time advertisements ‘on the go’

Kevin Shoemaker and Adam Scott Fohlen, Montgomery County, OH, Child Support Enforcement Division

Montgomery County is one of 12 Ohio counties collaborating on a [Parenting Time Opportunities for Children \(PTOC\) grant](#) to help unmarried parents establish a free, legally enforceable parenting time order at their administrative support hearing. The staff at the Montgomery County [Child Support Enforcement Agency](#) held its first PTOC-eligible hearing in March. The county set a goal of issuing 25 parenting time orders by the end of 2015. As of mid-August, the agency issued 26 parenting time orders (more than all other Ohio counties combined), already surpassing its preliminary goal.

Although Montgomery County has been a standout success, Ohio had pledged to issue 300 parenting orders as part of its grant. Most parents who hear about PTOC are excited to learn about it, but the county knew it needed to do more to get the word out to increase awareness and interest in this service.

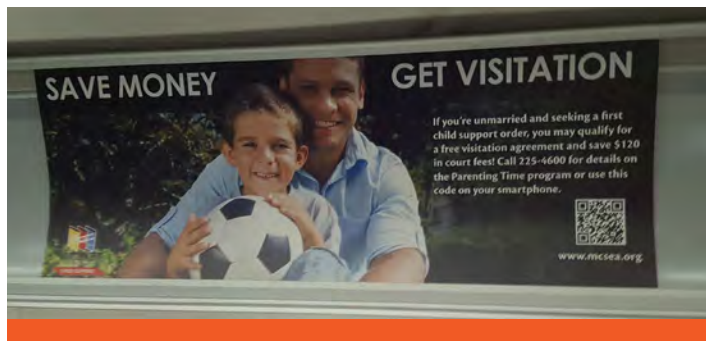
By mid-July, the county began a marketing campaign to promote parenting time. It started with signage and audio messaging on the local Regional Transit Authority (RTA) bus system. For a two-month period, Montgomery County had 50 interior signs in buses throughout the Greater Dayton Area. In addition, there were four large exterior signs that served as rolling billboards. Known as Queen Signs, these were located on the bus-stop side of the buses.

The RTA featured the audio messaging at 18 of the busiest bus stops across the market and played them at the RTA hub. A sensor on the buses triggered the message to play when the RTA vehicle approached the bus stop. The county also funded a \$12,000 radio campaign that featured the parenting time messages on 10 Dayton-area stations that do well with male audiences. County Commissioner Debbie Lieberman voiced the spots, which ran throughout the month of August. The child support office has the audio at the bottom of its [PTOC webpage](#).

By early September, Montgomery County issued 31 PTOC orders — more than 10% of the orders Ohio pledged to issue in less than six months of service. Of those, 13 were issued after

the marketing campaign started. Officials cannot prove that the campaign was responsible for the additional orders, but they believe it helped spread the word that child support is not just about collecting money. Child support is also about helping families and giving them tools to create a more stable and prosperous future for themselves and their children.

For more information about Montgomery County’s PTOC outreach campaign, contact Adam Fohlen at montg_admin_hearings@jfs.ohio.gov.



Office of Audit receives HHS recognition

Congratulations to the OCSE Office of Audit for receiving recognition from HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell in August!

OCSE’s Data Reliability Audit earned an HHS Recognition of Excellence award for the Most Adaptable and Portable Submission to the department’s newly established Best Practices Repository.

The award recognizes that the data reliability audits ensure that data used for performance-based financial incentives are complete, accurate, and verifiable. The audits have improved state incentive data and reporting systems by more than 50 percent. This best practice can be potentially replicated across many HHS grant programs to improve the reliability of data used for performance management by HHS and its grantees.



OCSE Commissioner Vicki Turetsky congratulates Office of Audit Director Kimberly Smith on her team’s recognition by HHS

Child Support Recognition Month Events



Caroline County, MD

Rayshelle Robinson, Caroline County Assistant Director for Child Support, reports that her county marked Maryland's Child Support Awareness month with education and outreach for parents, children, and the public. Staffers donated school supplies to hand out to kids, and ties and scarves for parents who receive and pay child support.



More than 875 people attended the 5th Annual Family Fun Fest in downtown Denton August 7. Over 700 children received book bags filled with school supplies during the festivities.



Baltimore, MD

Members of the Maryland State Department of Human Resources and the Child Support Enforcement Association presented [Paul's Place](#) Volunteer Coordinator Jayna Powell with over 75 backpacks stuffed with school supplies.

The association selected Paul's Place because of the staff's commitment to promoting academic success, providing mentoring, and improving life skills for children and youth in Southwest Baltimore. More than 80 percent of after-school participants see improved academic success through their participation with Paul's Place programs. The department and the child support office believe that, by helping Paul's Place, they are contributing to the success of Baltimore's future leaders!



Oregon

The Oregon Child Support Program used the month of August to celebrate their 40 years of helping families. Officials decided to hold events at many of the county fairs as well as numerous other community programs.

The theme they used was parent involvement. They printed up flyers to promote parent involvement in children's lives and backed this up with giveaways — color changing cups and flying discs. The cups came with a page of recipes that kids and their parents could make together. Families could play disk soccer and golf with the instructions that came with the toys.



District of Columbia

Thanks to the generosity of the District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General, the District's Child Support Services Division could hand out school supplies and backpacks to children who came into the office, and neckties and scarves to their parents.

"People who came in for services didn't expect to leave with something for their kids," noted Shanna Frost who collected donations from the attorney general's office and other agencies. "It was really nice. Little things can go a long way," she added.



Arizona

Arizona Governor Douglass Ducey also declared August Child Support Awareness Month in his state. The edict explained that the state's "Division of Child Support Services is committed to engaging with parents and families through improved accessibility, providing personal development and employment opportunities to assist Arizonans to reach their full potential."

Throughout the month, one of the Outreach and Community Initiatives unit's teams conducted or attended 29 events including a Family Connection Fun Day. Over 2,400 guests attended the festivities that included games, music, and entertainment, as well as community resources, job opportunities, and even free haircuts.



Kansas

Governor Sam Brownback designated August as Child Support Services Awareness Month in the Sunflower State. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides child support services to over 135,000 Kansas families.

During awareness month, the state launched an educational campaign about new hire reporting. Federal law requires employers to report new employees, which helps states set up income withholding orders on newly hired noncustodial parents. The campaign includes television and print advertising that directs employers to the [Kansas Department of Labor New Hire Directory website](#).



New Mexico

Governor Susan Martinez knows that getting children ready to go back to school is expensive, so as part of her declaration of Child Support Awareness month, she highlighted parental responsibility. She authorized a nearly month-long amnesty period for parents who had active bench warrants due to unpaid child support. The parents could come into one of the state's 14 child support offices to work with officials to try to clear up their cases. Those that did not risked being arrested during an end-of-month round up.

"You have to contribute to the upbringing of your children," said Governor Martinez. "Consistent child support payments are critical to helping kids and their families achieve economic stability, and New Mexico is committed to providing as many tools as possible to help parents support their children emotionally and financially."

Child Support Report

Child Support Report is published monthly by the Office of Child Support Enforcement. We welcome articles and high-quality digital photos to consider for publication. We reserve the right to edit for style, content and length, or not accept an article. OCSE does not endorse the practices or individuals in this newsletter. You may reprint an article in its entirety (or contact the author or editor for permission to excerpt); please identify *Child Support Report* as the source.

Mark Greenberg
Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families

Vicki Turetsky
Commissioner, OCSE

Gabrielle Pagin
Director, Division of Customer Communications

Kim Danek
Editor
kim.danek@acf.hhs.gov

